

May 14, 1999

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2068 '99 MAY 18 AM 1:30

Dockets Management Branch (HFA-305)
Food and Drug Administration
5630 Fishers Lane
Rm. 1061, Rockville, MD 20852

Food and Drug Administration,

This letter is to express my earnest concern that some people are suggesting that irradiated food items make it to the market place and ultimately to consumers bodies without consumers' knowledge, much less understanding, of the Cesium 137 irradiation process. It is bad enough that at present the public at large has no knowledge of what the Radura symbol indicates or what the irradiation process entails.

The symbols need to be present, recognizable and accompanied by an accurate written description of the process. I urge you to reject any legislation aimed at decreasing the visibility or concise nature of information to the consumer. Your agency has the important responsibility to protecting not only the public's health and safety, but also their right to information regarding irradiation with isotopes derived as byproducts of the production of the nuclear industry. We have the right to know and the right to reject putting such items into our body if we choose. Irradiated foods need to be "promenently and counspicuously" marked as such. The FDA instead of allowing decreased consumer understanding of such important nutritional, social and ethical issues should be instead fostering public understanding of both the process and the symbols and words which should continue to be found on all food items subject to irradiation.

Irradiation is not "Cold Pasteurization", that is a misnomer and any attempt by those who stand to benefit from the expansion of irradiation and especially its secrecy ought to be ashamed of misleading the public with a less fear inducing term. Call it what it is and let the consumers decide to consume or not.

Instead of the Radura being dropped, it should be accompanied by an explanation of the process it represents. Otherwise it is merely a (cute? flowery? sunburst? mother and child?) design which tells one nothing. We can only progress when the information about our environment is plain and understandable, not distorted or lacking. Please support education of the irradiation process, not permit its cover up.

Concerned,



Matthew M. Pierle

CC: The Honorable Russ Feingold
The Honorable Ron Kind

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